

The Olive School, Birmingham

14 Court Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham, West Midlands B11 4LX

Inspection dates

25–26 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 is significantly higher than the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Under the expert guidance of the principal, leaders have secured consistently high-quality teaching and curriculum planning. This results in pupils of all ages and different starting points making substantial progress in learning.
- Teaching is outstanding. Pupils respond well to their teachers' very high expectations.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, both in lessons and around the school. They have very positive attitudes to learning and love coming to school.
- Learning coaches are highly skilled in supporting the learning of individuals and groups of pupils. They make a significant contribution to these pupils' progress.
- Leaders at all levels are determined to ensure that pupils reach very high academic standards. They put robust systems in place to ensure that all staff know how excellence can be achieved.
- The school provides outstanding opportunities for pupils' personal development and welfare. Pupils are diligent and hard working. They learn how to become caring, responsible citizens who contribute to the life of the school and the wider community.
- Pupils greatly enjoy a rich and exciting curriculum that fires their imaginations, providing memorable experiences that engage and enthuse them.
- Children get off to a flying start in the excellent early years provision. From the outset they are taught how to be expert learners and achieve very well in all areas of learning.
- Governors are skilled, knowledgeable and know the school extremely well. They provide high levels of support and challenge to ensure that pupils get the highest quality of education.
- Leaders have correctly identified that, in all classes, a very small minority of pupils with low prior attainment need further help with spelling and handwriting.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Place greater emphasis in lessons on ensuring that low prior-attaining pupils improve their spelling and handwriting skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- In the three years that the school has been open, the principal has ensured that there are very strong foundations on which the school can grow, and which are in line with the shared vision of Star Academies. Relentlessly high expectations and ambition are shared at all levels. The recent issues pertaining to limitations of the site have not detracted from the school's main purpose of offering a rich and exciting curriculum to pupils. 'If my pupils cannot get to see the world then the world must come to them,' is the principal's mantra, which underpins the rationale of learning within the school.
- The principal leads her team from the moral stance of ensuring that there is equality of opportunity for every child and that there are no barriers to learning, only solutions. She has instilled the belief in her leaders that each child is capable of reaching the highest possible outcomes. She has successfully led teaching and learning by setting up effective systems of performance management and continuous professional development. Staff thrive under the clarity of her vision and guidance because they know what it is that they need to do in order to improve.
- Leaders at all levels have a steadfast determination to continuously improve. They have an incisive and accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness and put well-thought-out plans in place to ensure that pupils achieve the highest outcomes in all subjects.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is very thorough and any areas for development are readily followed up. Leadership has ensured that teachers are reflective learners and think deeply as to how they can consistently improve upon best practice.
- Leaders make highly intelligent use of their well-developed systems to check how well all pupils are making progress. If an individual or group of pupils could be doing better, all 'hands are on deck' to ensure that they quickly catch up. The principal meticulously analyses assessments and teaches her staff that assessment data represents actual pupils and needs to be interpreted accordingly when planning learning activities.
- School leaders work very closely with parents and carers. Parents know that their children are exceptionally well supported and that they themselves are seen as integral to the learning process. Parents are unanimous in their praise for the school. They can see the positive impact that the school is having on their children's learning and their personal development. 'I have seen remarkable improvement in my child's learning,' said one parent, speaking for many.
- Leadership of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is very responsive to individuals' needs. Leaders, teachers and learning coaches are very well trained to ensure that no pupil is left behind and that pupils make the very best progress from their starting points. This is because pupils with SEND have equal access to the exciting learning opportunities on offer and receive expert support in their learning.
- Pupil premium funding is used very effectively to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils across the school. Leaders pinpoint barriers to disadvantaged pupils' future

achievement and ensure that teachers carefully plan the practical steps they will take to ensure that these pupils are well supported. Learning coaches have been appointed and their impact has been most effective in reading, with all disadvantaged pupils in Year 2 attaining the expected standards.

- The school uses additional funding for primary physical education and sport very well. Pupils participate in an extensive and diverse range of clubs and competitive races, and very effective use is made of the swimming pool adjacent to the school. Sports coaches run well-attended enrichment clubs, and cycling has been encouraged, resulting in more pupils cycling to school.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school because leaders ensure that pupils have valuable learning experiences, such as learning Arabic, and participating in workshops from the Stone Age Man, Queen Victoria and Florence Nightingale. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their learning. They are justifiably proud of their achievements across a broad range of subjects. Memory boxes and class albums depicting the very broad range of visits and visitors are kept, so that pupils can relive their learning. This has a very positive impact on pupils knowing more and remembering more.
- The curriculum is carefully planned and focused to ensure that British values, opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the 4 Cs (character, community, creativity and curriculum) are inextricably woven through all learning opportunities. Leaders plan with teachers to ensure that these become active ingredients in learning activities and not just 'bolt-ons'.
- Learning opportunities are further underpinned by references to weekly Hadeeths and Duas (holy readings and prayers), which are shared in acts of collective worship. This contributes to pupils' outstanding personal development, as pupils are encouraged to aim high and understand key factors that have shaped their cultural heritage and life in modern Britain.

Governance of the school

- Governors fulfil their statutory duties exceptionally well. They are regular visitors to the school and gain an independent view of the school's effectiveness. There are very clear roles and responsibilities within the structure of the trust, with clear channels of delegation and communication.
- Governors are knowledgeable and are fully aware of the issues facing the community. They ensure that additional funding is spent well and know the impact it is having on improving pupils' outcomes.
- Governors know the school's strengths and areas for development. They use this information incisively to provide school leaders with focused and constructive challenge and support, to improve the life chances of all the pupils in their care.
- Governors are accountable to the trustees and work in collaboration to maintain high levels of accountability. They are not afraid to ask challenging questions about the progress of different groups and they gain an accurate independent view of the school by visiting regularly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- For trustees, governors and staff, the creation of a safe, protective and vigilant culture is the primary focus. Parents say that a culture of safety permeates all aspects of school life. They are delighted with the new arrangements of the early morning 'drop offs' to ease traffic congestion. They know that their children are safe in spite of several challenges presented on the current site.
- The school's systems, policies and procedures are tight and extremely well implemented. Recruitment checks are completed thoroughly and efficiently.
- The curriculum is carefully planned so that pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including when online. Pupils know about road safety, not talking to strangers and the importance of keeping a healthy body and mind.
- Parents trust leaders and staff to do whatever is in the best interest of the child, because they know that issues will be handled with the utmost professionalism and sensitivity. All staff have been trained in the 'Prevent' duty, and the school is very vigilant in ensuring that pupils are kept safe from any forms of radicalisation and extremism.
- The designated safeguarding lead responds to any concerns by taking prompt and effective action. The school works closely with other professionals and agencies to support pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching in the school is outstanding. Learning is thorough. Pupils master basic skills and learning behaviours, such as managing themselves and avoiding any distractions, in order to focus on the purpose of the lesson. Aply supported by learning coaches, they thrive in mastering concepts that help them to make substantial progress over time.
- Learning is always fun because of the highly interesting lessons that teachers plan. Pupils learn that when they come across difficult concepts, such as solving problems by subtracting thousands, hundreds, tens and units, as seen in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, they need to persevere and become resilient learners. Pupils are extremely well equipped in these situations and draw on previous learning, use the models displayed in classroom and ask for support from learning coaches and peers.
- The teaching of phonics and reading is very strong. Teachers have detailed subject knowledge of how to promote deep learning and understanding for pupils. For example, when learning phonics in Reception and Year 1, many opportunities are provided for pupils to practise the sounds that letters make. Consequently, pupils are very good at decoding unfamiliar words.
- Teachers have high aspirations for their pupils. Classrooms are hives of activity with pupils getting through a lot of work that has been set for them. Swift learning takes place because of meticulous planning based upon a thorough analysis of information from assessments. Teachers prepare a wide range of high-quality resources, which deepen learning. For example, in Year 1, pupils developed their vocabulary by reading sentences, prepared by the teachers, to their friends. This enabled them to reinforce

their learning of new vocabulary.

- Teaching develops pupils' skills very well across different subjects. In Year 3, pupils write up their scientific experiments in detail, testament to teachers' high expectations and explanations of the scientific process. In history, teachers skilfully engage pupils with 'visits' from Tudor monarchs and the Stone Age Man, ensuring that pupils have memorable learning experiences which inspire them to write about their learning. Teachers encourage many writing opportunities across the curriculum and pupils are able to write for a range of purposes and audiences very effectively.
- Occasionally, teachers do not insist that pupils with low prior attainment form their letters correctly and spell correctly. This results in repeated spelling mistakes. Leaders have already picked this up in their meticulous monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Senior leaders are skilled teachers who guide staff to ensure that teaching is of a consistently high quality throughout the school. They ensure that there are reliable routines in every lesson and that planning is precise and gives pupils the sequential steps in learning. This ensures that, regardless of pupils' starting points, they all attain high standards. Relationships throughout the school are exemplary because teachers and learning coaches are highly effective role models who pupils respect and trust.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. Pupils of all ages have high self-esteem and feel valued and respected. They take pride in their work, are diligent and hard working.
- The implementation of the 'STAR' (service, teamwork, ambition and respect) values has ensured that pupils are developing into caring citizens who take responsibility for those less fortunate than themselves. During Ramadan, pupils generously collected food for those who are needy internationally and the homeless in their local neighbourhood.
- Pupils are developing into responsible citizens who know that, even from an early age, they can be influential in their locality. Having undertaken an environmental walk linked with their geography project, pupils viewed the neighbourhood with a critical eye. They immediately contacted their Member of Parliament, who visited the school to listen to the pupils' views on environmental issues and local traffic.
- Pupils have many opportunities for leadership. They take on extra responsibilities as members of the school council, classroom monitors and play leaders.
- Pupils say that there is no bullying and should it occur, the vigilant staff would deal with it very effectively. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, both online and around the school. The use of worry boxes and books describing emotions, supported by 'I want to speak' cards in every class, creates mental health and well-being support.
- The wealth of sport and other physical activities encourage strikingly positive attitudes to health and fitness. Pupils commit to, and participate fully in, physical activities, such

as those developing muscle strength, coordination and balance. They fully appreciate the impact of healthy eating and use of exercise to maintain a healthy life balance.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' conduct throughout the day in and around school and in lessons is typically exemplary. From breakfast club through to lessons, pupils' excellent relationships with one another and their adherence to school rules ensure that the day runs smoothly and efficiently. Pupils, staff and parents are very positive about behaviour around the school.
- All the parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, strongly agreed or agreed that their child is happy and feels safe at school.
- Parents say that their children are very happy to come to school. This is borne out by their attendance, which is above the national average. Persistent absenteeism and lateness have decreased from last year because of the changes that leaders have made to the start of the school day. Additional support and strategies aimed at pupils who have been arriving late have also had a powerful impact.
- Pupils have outstanding behaviours for learning because teachers model the STAR values and pupils know what is expected of them. As a result, commendable behaviour is second nature to pupils. There are marked improvements in behaviour for individuals with particular behavioural needs. This is due to the strong emphasis placed on inclusive practice, where pupils know that their needs are met and that they are valued members of the school community. These pupils soon adopt the high standard of behaviour that is the norm of this school.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- In 2018, test results show that attainment at the expected standard in all subjects was well above average and in the highest 10% for all pupils at the end of key stage 1. Work in books and the school's monitoring of pupils' performance show that the vast majority of pupils in current year groups are making substantial progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieved very well and exceeded the expected standards for all pupils nationally in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Current work in books shows that these pupils are making excellent progress and are now attaining greater depth at least in line with other pupils nationally.
- Pupils with SEND make substantial progress. This is because of the very well-focused support and highly effective teaching by teachers and learning coaches. They make sure that pupils' work is set at just the right level to be challenging but achievable.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are very well provided for. They are presented with work that requires them to demonstrate their mastery of both mathematics and the English language. Work in books shows they are reaching higher than age-related standards in reading, writing and mathematics across the school.
- Standards in mathematics and writing are high. Every chance is taken to make sure

that pupils can, for example, count and calculate accurately. Pupils are highly skilled in solving problems. Writing is often imaginative and exciting to read. Work is neat and spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate.

- The results from the Year 1 phonics screening check show that pupils make a very good start in understanding the sounds letters make, often from low starting points. Pupils are confident readers because the strong focus on reading is sustained throughout the school.
- Pupils who leave Year 2 are very well prepared for challenges in key stage 2. As a result, when in Year 3, they produce high-quality work. In science, they are able to write skilfully about the functions of parts of the human body, using technical vocabulary such as oesophagus and saliva. In history, they write in depth about differences between past and present hospitals. Through their in-depth work on understanding British values, they appreciate the institution of the National Health Service. They gain a coherent knowledge and understanding of Britain's past and that of the wider world.
- Pupils make substantial progress across the curriculum. In design and technology, pupils design and make products that solve real and relevant problems in different contexts. The study of famous artists inspires pupils to appreciate different types of art, and the use of music in mathematics enables pupils to recall times tables when singing to raps.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- From low starting points, children, including disadvantaged children and children with SEND, get off to a flying start because staff assess their individual needs accurately. This enables activities to be tailored to children's exact needs. As a result, children make outstanding progress. By the time they leave Reception, the large majority of children achieve a good level of development and are ready to join Year 1 as confident learners.
- Exceptionally strong links with parents help children settle quickly when they enter the early years provision. High expectations and the consistent reinforcement of daily routines in a nurturing environment establish a firm base for children's excellent behaviour. They work and play well together and know how to take turns, listen to what other people are saying and cooperate very well with each other.
- Additional funding is used well to provide resources and support for disadvantaged children. Leaders have a very good understanding of the impact this has on children's learning. Disadvantaged children make similarly excellent progress to that made by other children and they achieve equally well.
- The high emphasis placed upon learning vocabulary, both in lessons and in supporting self-chosen activities, enables children to practise what they have learned in a variety of situations, both indoors and outdoors.
- Staff reinforce important skills in speaking, listening, reading, writing and mathematics frequently throughout each day. For example, adults encourage children to use the letter sounds to recognise rhyming words and find the word that does not rhyme with the other words. Familiarisation with stories, such as the characters in 'Handa's

Surprise', enables children to know more and remember more. Children make excellent gains in personal, social and emotional development due to the strong emphasis on faith and character education. From a very early age, children are taught to respect and value the main world religions and this has a positive effect on their early understanding of multi-cultural Britain.

- Children are given highly stimulating experiences so that they are always motivated and continuously want to explore and find things out for themselves. For example, when riding their trikes outdoors, they soon realised that slowing down when taking bends had a positive effect on the safety of others.
- The outstanding leadership of the early years has accurately identified key areas for improvement. The early years team constantly refine their practice in order to ensure that their teaching is of the highest standard. There are very well thought through plans to make further improvements and there is a very discernible sense of drive and ambition to offer the best possible provision.
- Parents are seen as true partners in learning and are encouraged to share 'magical moments' of their children's development with teachers. Leaders have taught them how to observe their children's learning and help improve their vocabulary.
- The early years team strongly promotes children's safety and well-being. Staff provide high levels of supervision and engagement in learning activities. They ensure that all safety and safeguarding arrangements are robustly applied. Regular daily risk assessments are carried out outdoors. Consequently, all children feel very safe and secure at school.

School details

Unique reference number	142888
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10088456

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	360
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mustafa Mohammed
Principal	Rifat Batool
Telephone number	01216 577100
Website	www.olivebirmingham.com
Email address	info@olivebham.staracademies.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened on 1 September 2016. It is a Muslim designated faith school and is part of Star Academies. The trust is run by a board of trustees which has delegated responsibility to the local governing body.
- The school is located on a temporary site in inner Birmingham on the ground floor of a two-storey local authority library building, with further classrooms housed on the site.
- Currently, the school has Reception, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 classes and is growing year on year until it has the full primary age range.
- Almost all of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups. About two thirds are pupils of Pakistani heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is slightly above average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average.
- The school runs a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes to gather a wide view of evidence about what it is like to be a pupil at this school. Most visits were carried out jointly with one of a range of senior leaders.
- While in class, inspectors reviewed work in pupils' books and on display, and looked at a range of information that the school has on pupils' progress.
- As well as speaking informally with staff and pupils during the day, inspectors met with groups of pupils, teachers, leaders, governors and trustees.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day and heard pupils read.
- Inspectors spoke to senior leaders and pupils about learning. They looked at a range of documentation regarding safeguarding, SEND provision and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors took account of the 81 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. They also considered confidential responses sent by parents.

Inspection team

B Matusiak-Varley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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